C.B.S. Ends 'Instant Analysis' of Presidents' Talks

By ALBIN KREBS

The Columbia Broadcasting System will cease immediately the practice of providing so-called "instant analysis" following Presidential speeches carried on its television and radio networks.

The major policy change was made public in a one-paragraph footnote tacked on to a statement by William S. Paley, board chairman of C.B.S., Inc. The statement said C.B.S. would henceforth schedule special programs for opposing views, usually within a week after a President has made a speech with which there might be "significant national disagreement."

C.B.S. newsmen welcomed the policy on presenting contrasting views, but there was widespread unhappiness with the new prohibition of analysis of Presidential speeches immediately after their delivery. One correspondent called the change "catastrophic."

Mr. Paley was unavailable for comment regarding reports that the new policy on "instant analysis" represented, at least in part, a response to pressure from C. B. S.-affiliated stations. Affiliates of the Columbia Broadcasting System and of the other networks were said to have been urging an end to "instant analysis" ever since 1969, when Vice President Agnew coined the phrase in a speech condemning network news practices.

A spokesman for the broadcasting system said yesterday that Mr. Paley "personally devised the new policy, in consultation with others, including top C. B. S. News executives."

In practice, this will mean that when a President makes a speech at, say 9 P.M., C.B.S. News will not present an analysis of it until its next regular network program, "The Morning News," at 7 A.M. the following day.

Although some C.B.S. News correspondents apparently were furious over the new rule. Eric Sevareid, whose chief duty in Washington is analysis and commentary, welcomed the change.

"I don't mind it because I've always been a little uncomfortable with instant analysis," Mr. Sevareid said. "It works O.K. when you get an advance text of a speech, or a briefing on its content, but if you don't have those advantages, what comes out on the air is poor journalism. We're not being fair to ourselves or our audiences. That's my feeling, but I suspect I'm in a minority around here."

Another correspondent, who asked that his name not be used, said: "I think the ban on analysis is catastrophic, and I think I speak for most C.B.S. newsmen. Analysis is one of the things we've always done better than the other networks. When the going got tough on this matter after Agnew's blast, C.B.S. didn't buckle, but now it has—on the executive level."

Spokesmen for the American Broadcasting Company and the National Broadcasting Company said that those networks would continue to offer analysis following Presidential speeches when they felt it was warranted.

In his statement announcing C.B.S.'s intention to provide time for opponents' responses to some Presidential speeches, Mr. Paley said the aim was to provide "fair and balanced coverage of public issues."

"Recent Presidents," he said, "have conceived as one of the main functions of he executive the focusing of national attention on public issues. To accomplish this, they have turned more and more to broadcasting as a means of direct access to the people. This in turn has increased the need for broadcasting to develop new avenues to provide a broad spectrum of significant views and a multiplicity of representative voices on public issues."

Under the new policy, whenever a President, on radio or TV, speaks on "matters on major policy concerning which there is significant national disagreement," C.B.S. will present a broadcast of other viewpoints. C.B.S. News will determine in each case the length, format and people for rebuttal broadcasts. The broadcasts will be scheduled as soon as practicable, generally no later than one week after the President speaks.

They will be presented on the broadcasting system's TV and radio networks, with which about 500 stations are affiliated.

Spokesmen for the American Broadcasting Company and the National Broadcasting Company said that those networks had made a practice of providing rebuttals to Presidential speeches when, in their judgment, rebuttals were warranted. There will be no change in those policies, the spokesmen said.

C.B.S. Wins Sevaried Case

WASHINGTON, June 6 (AP) —The Federal Communications Commission refused today to require the Columbia Broadcasting System to broadcast opposing comments back-to-back to those of Eric Sevareid on the C.B.S. Evening News. Horace P. Rowley 2d of New York, who requested the order, had contended that this was the public's only "reasonable opportunity" to decide between conflicting views. The commission said that the fairness doctrinet did not require a broadcaster to present contrasting views on the same program, and that it was required only to aford reasonable opportunity for contrasting views in overall programing.

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